

MEETING MINUTES AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION  
WEARE NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MARCH 4, 2010

**DRAFT VERSION**

**Present:** Mr. Luke Drake, Chairman, Mr. George Malette, Vice Chairman, Mrs. Wendy Stevens, Mr. Ian McSweeney, guests Mr. Rick Barry and Ms. Lisa Johnston

**Absent:** Paul Gannon, Paul Bessey, Robert Pare, and David Trumble

The meeting was called to order at 7pm.

George made a motion to approve the minutes, Wendy seconded.

Luke circulated the Conservation Newsletter produced by the Merrimack County Conservation District for review.

The tax map with soils overlay was presented. George mentioned this is the most beneficial map for us. Amy from SNHPC will send a pdf and Wendy will forward to the group. George mentioned this map was very useful and that we should present it to the Conservation Commission in the spirit of sharing information. Luke suggested presenting it to the Conservation Commission next Wednesday at their next meeting. George and Ian volunteered to do this.

In addition, Wendy will give ftp access to Jay Couture so he can access the GIS files.

POTLUCK

Luke mentioned he received a lot of positive feedback and would like to schedule another dinner before October. He would like to add a speaker. He mentioned Rick Lemay, a resident of Weare who runs the USDA certified slaughterhouse in Goffstown and is available for discussions on his operation as well as discussion various cuts of meat etc. A tentative date of June 26<sup>th</sup> was chosen. Wendy noted the Farmers Market opens June 18<sup>th</sup>.

George mentioned several presentations he could offer; Organic Vegetable Gardening, Fall Garden to Table, Backyard Flocks. George has these

available as PowerPoint's. George and Luke both have PowerPoint presentation equipment.

Everyone will check their schedules and reconvene next month.

#### FARMERS MARKET BOOTH

Wendy asked about booth set up for the Agricultural Commission at the market. It was to start with a small set up, not a separate booth. Wendy asked people to suggest a book list for farmers and several were presented:

*High Yield Gardening, Majorie Hunt*  
*Knotts Handbook of Vegetables Reference Book*  
*Four Season Harvest, Coleman*  
*The New Organic Grower, Coleman*

George mentioned perhaps the library is the correct place to lend books out and thought they might be willing to create a display about the Agricultural Commission. Luke volunteered to speak with the library.

Luke summarized we should spend more time developing booth ideas and some weeks it may be small and when more people can attend it will make a larger presentation. One option discussed was to try "something bigger" once a month.

#### NOFA

##### NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION WINTER CONFERENCE

The NOFA conference is Saturday and Wendy will bring the map and present it on poster board & easel. We will also display products of Weare to include Wendy's herbal products, Abigail's Bakery bread, Clayton's Way Farm Soap. In addition several of the Weare Farmers' Market vendors will be there presenting their own goods, including Mrs. Beasley's dog treats and Mountain Farm. Lisa Johnston of Coldwell Banker will be present with active real estate listings to present in conjunction with the prime soils map. Luke is attempting to attend.

## POSSIBLE SPNHF LAND CONSERVATION PROJECT

George would like us to be aware of a potential conservation property; Dave and Barbara Purington who own a tract of land between Quaker St. and Flanders Memorial Dr. Ian mentioned this was a Federal Farm & Ranch Funding Program. The prime soils map was reviewed and it was noted that there was an extensive amount of prime agricultural soil on this parcel, and also that it was a large parcel. We will be informed once this comes formally before any boards or commissions.

George inquired if the Popes were still moving forward with the Melvin Farm conservation project and Ian replied yes the Popes are still moving forward.

## LAND IN WEARE

Wendy inquired with Lisa about the 38 acres that newly appeared on the market today. The parcel is 1, 2 and 3 Twin Bridge Rd.

Ian brought up that Judy took the tax map and highlighted all town owned land as well as town conserved land and inquired if town owned land with agricultural soils could be used for farming. Town owned open space with no easement may be able to be farmed, but town owned land with an easement will have restrictions. George noted that Felch Farm used to be a farmed and when it was placed into conservation, now it cannot be farmed at all. Luke summarized that we need to evaluate prime agricultural soils that are remaining in the town and see if we have the soils available for farming.

Luke would like to identify parcels and create a presentation for the conservation commission identifying remaining prime soil properties which have potential for agricultural uses. The idea would be to highlight the importance of considering agricultural aspects of land for conservation so that, if conserved, the properties might still be used for agriculture. It was mentioned that Jay Couture might be able to help us with this presentation.

Luke summarized the ultimate goal of the project is to underscore the importance of keeping viable parcels of prime soil properties in town intact.

Wendy and Ian agreed to contact Jay about his GIS map services & data sharing capabilities.

George remarked this was a great goal for 2010.

#### G.R.O.W. UPDATE (GROWING RURAL OCCUPATIONS OF WEARE)

Wendy was asked for an update on her non-profit efforts. She made a small introduction stating that she is attempting to open a non-profit that would create a local food restaurant, local foods store & economic center specifically at the Weare Center Store. She spoke with Mike Koski of UNH Coop Ext) and he is very interested in collaborating with a 4H Program and after-school program, as well as homeschoolers education involving the teaching of growing foods, preparing local food, selling food, dealing with customers, etc.

She mentioned she spoke with Scott Johnson of the USDA today about some new funding that just came available federally, however Weare does not qualify as a low income town, and therefore grant funds cannot be procured. Scott has also indicated that the USDA looks for non-profits that have 5 years experience with proven track records. Wendy is still developing a Board of Directors which is the next step before registering with the state as a non-profit.

#### UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, NADA HADDAD

George mentioned he is speaking at two events presented by the Agricultural Resources of the UNH Coop Ext. They are two panel discussions on how towns can start agricultural commissions. The dates are 3/16 at 5:30 pm in Brentwood and April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at SNHPC in Manchester. George will be presenting at both events. Wendy volunteered to attend the April 7<sup>th</sup> event.

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GARDEN

George brought up the Elementary School Garden. He mentioned reestablishing cool weather crops and the gardens that were put in last year by the Agricultural Commission. Luke volunteered to talk with Jean

Erickson, the teacher the commission worked with last year to establish the garden.

George mentioned April 10<sup>th</sup> from 8:30-4 at John Stark High School, SPNHF will be presenting 2 workshops, one concerning the Farm and Ranch Land Protection. Wendy noted that the brochure carried Weare resident Rosemary Conroy's duck artwork.

George mentioned that our next meeting will be the first meeting after the Town Meeting and that we will have to re-elect officers. He also noted that we should consider establishing by-laws and rules of procedure.

Rick Barry shared Lisa Nevins contact information. She is the education director for Agriculture in the Classroom and is available to do complete presentations. <http://www.agclassroom.org/search.cfm?q=nevins>.

Luke made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46pm.

Wendy J. Stevens, Member  
Weare Agricultural Commission